

## GENDER AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Gender equality and Communication are closely linked dimensions for rural development. Integrating gender with communication can speed up rural transformation. In spite of the implementation of several programmes, the rural India is characterized with gender discrimination, unemployment and poverty. Rural people are still unaware of the provisions of the ongoing schemes and their rights. With that view, the present research has been undertaken to study the importance of gender and communication in rural development by considering MGNREGA. The study was conducted in two districts of Odisha named Mayurbhanj and Jharsuguda. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents and the total sample size was 380 including 228 beneficiaries and 152 non-beneficiaries. Under social impact factor, decreased gender discrimination and facilities for women empowerment explained 27.21% variance in the data. The overall impact was more in Mayurbhanj district than that of Jharsuguda district. The mean rank and agreement coefficients were high for friends and local leaders in Mayurbhanj district, whereas in case of Jharsuguda district, it was high for stakeholders and local leaders. Maximum respondents suggested that periodical meetings should be conducted with the stakeholders to share and exchange information about MGNREGA and broadcasting of information should be done through radio, television etc.*

**KEYWORDS:** Gender, Communication & Rural Development

**Received:** Jan 08, 2018; **Accepted:** Jan 29, 2018; **Published:** Feb 22, 2018; **Paper Id.:** IJASRAPR20182

### INTRODUCTION

Women play key roles in rural development, but they are constrained by two important types of gender gaps. First, they have unequal access as compared to men in productive resources and secondly, there is insufficient information about the roles and resources of women and men. It would be better to close these gender gaps, which will be good for both men and women and ultimate growth of the rural areas. The role of women in agriculture and rural development is vital. It reveals that if the gap between men and women will be reduced, that will generate more agricultural resources and yields on women's farms by 20-30 percent and increase agricultural production in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent. That will reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 12-17 percent (FAO, 2011). The contribution of rural women has a positive impact towards independence, employment, management, and family income (Sadeghi et al., 2015).

Most of the communication efforts are targeted to uplift the rural livelihood by disseminating the developmental messages through media, using multiple channels. It brings solution for many complementary strategies related to gender as well as rural development. Persuasive communication for rural development has been given highest priority for bringing about desirable social and behavioural change among the most vulnerable rural poor and women

(Agrawal, 2006). Poor communication reduces the relative advantage of exploitation of local indigenous knowledge systems (Amadi, 2012). The MGNREGA is being considered as a public works program and the massive and most aspiring communal certainty in the world. This scheme has certainly a boon for the rural people in strengthening their economic conditions (Gautam and Bhardwaj, 2013). The salient features of the MGNREGA are a right based framework, time bound guarantee, labor intensive works, decentralized planning, work-site facilities, women empowerment, transparency and accountability (Pal, 2013). This will become the massive component for rural development. With the point of view, the following objectives are taken into consideration:

- To find out the impact of MGNREGA in rural development on gender perspective
- To analyze the communication behavior of the respondents with regard to MGNREGA

## METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey research design was conducted. Based on the performance indicator (employment provided to the household and person days) of work of MGNREGA, one good performing district i.e. Mayurbhanj and one poor performing district i.e. Jharsuguda were selected. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents of the total sample size was 380 including 228 beneficiaries and 152 non-beneficiaries. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule supplemented with a focus group discussion. Descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation along with non-parametric analyses (Exploratory factor analysis, Kendall W and Friedman Chi-square test) were used to derive insights from the empirical data. All the analyses were conducted using Statistical package SPSS (Ver.16; SPSS Inc, USA).

### Impact Factors of MGNREGA through Exploratory Factor Analysis

The perceived impact of the program was assessed through a multi-dimensional questionnaire. The data collected from both districts were subjected to factor analysis (EFA) to identify the latent factors governing the impact perceptions. The pattern matrix of the factor analysis is presented in the Table 1, The EFA estimates Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.941 was above the minimum level of 0.5, and a significant Bartlett's Chisquare ( $\chi^2 = 19283.70$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) indicated that the sample size chosen for this investigation was adequate (Field, 2000).

The analysis resulted in three factors that exceeded eigen value exceeding one which together explained 60% variance in the data. Regarding the loadings of items on the factors, the items which had a minimum loading of 0.5 on any factor, were retained. The criteria of using a minimum of 0.5 factor loading were used, since the sample size was over 300 (Field, 2000). During the analysis, certain items didn't load significantly in any factor, thus removed from the analysis. The pattern matrix is given in Table 1.

The first factor describing "social impact" including the items such as social participation, decreased gender discrimination, reducing labor migration, decrease in religion, cooperation and facilities for women empowerment explained 27.21% variance in the data. It reflects the impact of MGNREGA on gender perspective. The second factor indicating "environmental impact" including items creating new water sources, promoting cultivation, an increase in groundwater level and improvement in soil quality together explained 20.79% variance. While the third factor referring "economic impact" involving items getting proper housing, ensuring assured food supply, providing quality education to children and creating new road connectivity together explained 12% variation in the data. The finding is in accordance

with the findings of Thomas and Bhatia (2012). Mayurbhuj respondents had significantly high positive perceptions ( $t=3.50$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) about the impact of the MGNREGA programme than Jharsuguda respondents.

### Mean Ranks and Agreement Coefficients of Communication Sources

Data on respondents' ranking of communication sources were subjected to non-parametric statistical analyses using the Kendall coefficient of concordance ( $W$ ) and Friedman analysis of variance. The Kendall's  $W$  indicated the agreement among respondents in the ranking of communication sources. Generally, the value of  $W$  ranges between 0 and 1, where 1 designates perfect concordance and 0 indicates no agreement or independence of samples (Conover, 1999). The Friedman analysis of variance was performed to establish significant differences among respondents' rankings among the communication sources.

Table 2 shows the mean ranks and agreement coefficients of communication sources used by the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Mayurbhanj district. The significant Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance indicated that the beneficiaries ( $W = 0.889$ ) and non-beneficiaries ( $W = 0.715$ ) applied same criteria in ranking the communication sources. It shows the consistency in evaluating the communication sources with reasonable accuracy. A significant Friedman ANOVA established that the communication sources differed in terms of their importance to the respondents. The beneficiaries preferred the 'friends' ahead of other communication sources followed by 'stakeholders' and 'local leaders'. The communication sources such as 'internet', 'HLS', 'NGOs' and 'print media', were least preferred. 'GPO', 'relatives', 'PNB', 'Television' and 'radio' were equally preferred by the beneficiaries. Whereas in case of non-beneficiaries, 'local leaders' were preferred more ahead of other communication sources followed by 'friends' and 'GPO'. The communication sources such as 'internet', 'HLS', 'NGOs' and 'print media', were least preferred. 'GPO', 'relatives', 'Television' 'radio' and 'PNB', were preferred equally.

Table 3 shows the mean ranks and agreement coefficients of communication sources used by the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Jharsuguda district. The significant Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance indicated that the beneficiaries ( $W = 0.279$ ) and non-beneficiaries ( $W = 0.243$ ) applied same criteria in ranking the communication sources. It shows the consistency in evaluating the communication sources with reasonable accuracy. A significant Friedman ANOVA established that the communication sources differed in terms of their importance to the respondents. The beneficiaries preferred the 'stakeholders' ahead of other communication sources followed by 'local leaders' and 'friends'. The communication sources such as 'internet', 'HLS', 'NGOs' and 'print media', were least preferred. 'Relatives', 'GPO', 'PNB', 'Television' and 'radio' were equally preferred by the beneficiaries. Whereas in case of non-beneficiaries, 'local leaders' were preferred more ahead of other communication sources followed by 'stakeholders' and 'friends'. The communication sources such as 'internet', 'HLS', 'NGOs' and 'print media', were least preferred. 'Relatives', 'Television' 'GPO', 'radio' and 'PNB', were preferred equally.

### Respondents' Opinion for Taking Initiatives to Improve Communication Strategy of MGNREGA Program

The data furnished in Table 4 shows suggestions of the respondents for taking initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the communication strategy of MGNREGA program. In Mayurbhanj district, cent percent of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries had suggested that periodical meetings should be conducted with the stakeholders to share and exchange the information about MGNREGA and broadcasting of information should be done through radio, television etc. But in Jharsuguda district, cent percent of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries had suggested that

communication must be based on audience need, use of media channels mostly liked by the audience, audio-visual materials should be used more to prevent barriers of illiteracy, periodical meetings should be conducted with the stakeholders to share and exchange the information about MGNREGA and broadcasting of information should be done through radio, television etc. The finding is similar with the finding of Amadi (2012).

## CONCLUSIONS

Gender equality and communication are essential parts for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in the rural areas. It will provide new information, ideas and technologies to strengthen rural women. Based on this, the study examined the impact of MGNREGA in rural development and the communication behavior of the respondents with regard to MGNREGA. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that under social impact factor, decreased gender discrimination and facilities for women empowerment explained 27.21% variance in the data. The overall impact is more in Mayurbhanj district than that of Jharsuguda district as perceived by the respondents. The mean rank and agreement coefficients were high for friends and local leaders in Mayurbhanj district, whereas in case of Jharsuguda district, it was high for stakeholders and local leaders by the respondents. Maximum respondents suggested that periodical meetings should be conducted with the stakeholders to share and exchange the information about MGNREGA and broadcasting of information should be done through radio, television etc.

**Table 1: The Pattern Matrix Showing the Factor Loadings of Impact Factors in Both Mayurbhanj and Jharsuguda Districts of Odisha**

Impact Indicators	Factor Loadings		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Increase in Household income	.569	-	-
Helps to get proper housing	-	-	.645
Assured food supply	-	-	.764
Helped in providing quality education to children	-	-	.567
Created new road connectivity	-	-	.664
Created new water sources	-	.886	-
Promoting cultivation	-	.914	-
Increased groundwater level	-	.942	-
Improvement in soil quality	-	.969	-
Didn't help increase agricultural production	-	-	-.870
Did not help in increasing the social participation	-.509	-	-
Decreased gender discrimination	.946	-	-
Reduced labour migration	.932	-	-
Decreased in religious cooperation	-.644	-	-
Facilities for women empowerment	.975	-	-
Easy access to worksite facilities	-	-	.671
Eigen value	8.17	6.24	3.47
Percentage of variance explained	27.21	20.79	12

**Extraction Method:** Maximum Likelihood

**Rotation Method:** Promax with Kaiser Normalization

**Table 2: Mean Ranks and Agreement Coefficients of Communication Sources Used by the Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries in Mayurbhanj, Odisha**

Communication Sources	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
	Mean Rank	Overall Rank	Mean Rank	Overall Rank
Local leaders	9.58c	3	10.19a	1
Friends	10.66a	1	9.06b	2
Relatives	9.16d	5	7.90d	5

Table 2: Contd.,				
Stakeholders	10.01b	2	9.04bc	3
Gram Panchayat Official (GPO)	9.21d	4	8.90cd	4
Panchayat Notice Board (PNB)	7.31e	6	7.08e	7
Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	2.47h	9	2.87g	9
Help Line Service (HLS)	2.47h	9	2.87g	9
Television	5.98f	7	7.14e	6
Radio	5.98f	7	6.69e	7
Print media	2.68g	8	3.39f	8
Internet	2.47h	9	2.87g	9
Kendall W	0.889**		0.715**	
Friedman Chi-square	1124.026**		605.95**	

¥ Rank order reversed (1 - Not at all; 5- Daily)

φ Values followed by same letter indicates no significant difference among those sources ( $p < 0.05$ )

\*\* Significant at 1% level ( $p < 0.01$ )

**Table 3: Mean Ranks and Agreement Coefficients of Communication Sources Used by the Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries in Jharsuguda, Odisha**

Communication Sources	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries	
	Mean Rank	Overall Rank	Mean Rank	Overall Rank
Local leaders	7.74ab	2	7.98a	1
Friends	7.72a	3	7.08ab	3
Relatives	7.58ab	4	7.05b	4
Stakeholders	7.88a	1	7.41ab	2
Gram Panchayat Official (GPO)	7.07b	5	6.77bc	5
Panchayat Notice Board (PNB)	6.83bc	6	6.55bc	7
Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)	4.99d	10	5.33c	9
Help Line Service (HLS)	4.99d	10	5.33c	9
Television	6.65bc	7	7.05b	4
Radio	6.38c	8	6.53bc	6
Print media	5.19d	9	5.59c	8
Internet	4.99d	10	5.33c	9
Kendall W	0.279**		0.243**	
Friedman Chi-square	575.97**		200.55**	

¥ Rank order reversed (1 - Not at all; 5- Daily)

φ Values followed by same letter indicates no significant difference among those sources ( $p < 0.05$ )

\*\* Significant at 1% level ( $p < 0.01$ )

**Table 4: Respondents' Opinion for Taking Initiatives to Improve Communication Strategy of MGNREGA Programme**

Initiatives	Responses			
	Mayurbhanj (N=192)		Jharsuguda (N=188)	
	B (N=115)	N-b (N=77)	B (N=113)	N-b (N=75)
1. Communication must be based on audience need	111 (96.50*)	73 (94.80)	113 (100.00)	75 (100.00)
2. Use of media channels mostly liked by the audience	112 (97.40)	75 (97.40)	113 (100.00)	75 (100.00)
3. Audio-visual materials should be used more to prevent barriers of illiteracy	112 (97.40)	75 (97.40)	113 (100.00)	75 (100.00)
4. Use of motivational speakers possessing sound skill of using appropriate communication aids to deliver information	73 (63.50)	54 (68.80)	92 (81.40)	66 (88.00)
5. Panchayat officials should be well equipped with latest information	70 (60.90)	38 (49.40)	67 (59.30)	47 (62.70)

Table 4: Contd.,				
6. Periodical meetings should be conducted with the stakeholders to share and exchange the information about MGNREGA	115 (100.00)	77 (100.00)	113 (100.00)	75 (100.00)
7. Broadcasting of information through radio, television etc.	115 (100.00)	77 (100.00)	113 (100.00)	75 (100.00)
8. Publication of newsletters, magazines etc.	40 (34.80)	44 (57.10)	4 (3.50)	13 (17.30)
9. Establishing information kiosks at Panchayat level	37 (32.20)	29 (37.70)	6 (5.30)	20 (26.70)
10. Giving appointment to resource person (Knowledge about the programme) at block level	28 (24.30)	23 (29.90)	72 (63.70)	59 (78.70)

\*Note-1: B-Beneficiaries, N-b- Non-beneficiaries

Note-2: Figures given in the parenthesis indicate percentage

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